

LOUDOUN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

Monday, June 28, 2010

6:00 PM

Purcellville Room

Planning Commission Sub-Committee Meeting—ZOAM 2009-0003 Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Sign Regulations

- I. Staff presentation: Sign Permit Applications and Key Issues – Marsha Keim, Zoning Permits Manager (Attachment 1)
- II. Discussion item: Question and Answer session with Members of the Sign Ordinance Volunteer Working Group (SOVWG) (Attachment 2)
- III. Discussion item: Review and amendment to the purpose statement (Section 5-1201 of the Zoning Ordinance) (Attachment 3)
- IV. Discussion item: Additional questions/assumptions on basic issues to guide future discussion on the draft text and matrix (Attachment 4)
- V. Discussion item: Agenda for future meetings

ATTACHMENT 1

Questions posed to Ms. Keim:

1. What aspects of the current ordinance should be changed? How?
2. What is the feasibility of an administrative procedure for sign plans as described in Attachment 4?
3. From a permitting standpoint, how would the industry proposal for signs not in the ordinance going through a minor special exception be reviewed?

ATTACHMENT 1

A1-1

ATTACHMENT 2

Questions posed to the SOVWG:

1. Do you consider the Ad Hoc Committee proposal to be a reasonable solution to the commercial section of the ordinance, for which there is general agreement that it is outdated for the land forms the county now has in place and being constructed, or are the proposed standards bare minimums with the expectation that the legislative process (minor special exception) before the board will be used to obtain what most applicants will seek?
2. What is your opinion of the administrative sign plan process described in Attachment 4?
3. What distinctions does the industry make for office and for retail signs?
4. Can you suggest the nature of signs you think might be requested that would not be in the ordinance when it is revised?
5. Can you suggest criteria that might be used for such requests?
6. If a hotel were to be developed in the PD-MUB, per the matrix, it technically falls under two categories: (4)(a) and (4)(d). Pursuant to note 6, the more specific listing [(4)(d)] applies. Was the group aware of this as they constructed the matrix?
7. In the matrix, under the column of "maximum area of any one sign", what is the rationale for the difference between "1 SF/LF " under (4)(c), but then "1SF/100SF of Façade" under (4)(d). Why this change and please show how this would look.
8. Where did the work group get precedent for (a) signs projecting above the roofline, (b) excluding the background in calculating the area of a sign, (c) using an intersection as an entrance for a development, and (d) the formula for calculating the permitted square footage based on linear façade.

ATTACHMENT 2

A2-1

Lohr, Amy

From: Syska, Helena
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Lohr, Amy
Cc: Syska, Helena
Subject: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose
Attachments: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose.docx

Dear Amy,

Thank you and all the staff for their excellent presentations at yesterday's first Sign Ordinance Subcomm'e meeting.

Attached is the draft rewrite of the Purpose following our discussions. To the extent possible, I hope it captures the intent of our discussion and comments that were submitted. The section covers the following outline:

--Effect of Visual Environment on Community --Contribution of Good Signage to the Visual Environment --LC's Commitment to Good Signage --Primary Purposes of Signage --Value of Careful Control over Signage --Priority of Signage in Zoning and Land Use --Standards Covered for Signage --Reasons for Regulations

Please forward this draft to the Subcomm'e, other Planning Commission members, and appropriate staff for review and submission of additional comments to you for our next consideration as directed by Subcomm'e Chair Maio.

Thanks again,
Helena

Helena Syska
Sterling District Planning Commissioner
County of Loudoun ~ Commonwealth of Virginia

Notice: Please be advised that all correspondence to government officials becomes part of the public record and may be subject to inspection under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Zoning Ordinance

Section 5-1200 Sign Regulations.

5-1201 Purpose.

The visual environment has an effect on and is an important element in safeguarding life, health and property and in preserving the natural beauty, historic and cultural attributes, unique character and attractiveness of communities.

The intent of this section, therefore, is to encourage well-designed signage that contributes in positive ways to Loudoun County's visual environment while expressing local character and helping to develop a distinctive image of the County.

Loudoun County recognizes that signs are a necessary form of communication and will strive to provide clear and consistent rules and regulations and an efficient and effective means of administering and enforcing sign regulations.

The primary purposes of signage regulations are (1) to help people find a location without difficulty or confusion and (2) to clearly identify places of business and communities.

Careful control of signage can protect the general welfare and safety of individuals and property values, support economic vitality and viability, and enhance Loudoun's communities overall.

Signs are to be considered accessory components of an overall composition of architectural elements, not as freestanding or dominant architectural elements by themselves. They are subordinate to the structures and land use functions they reference.

This Section establishes standards for the location, design, construction, installation, display, safety and maintenance of signs.

More specifically, while not restricting the freedom of expression, regulations are hereby established for

- assuring compatibility of signs with land uses,
- promoting reasonable, orderly, attractive and effective signage,
- controlling the type, number, physical dimensions, design and location of signs,
- treating similar types of signs consistently,
- minimizing competing demands for visual attention to graphic messages or displays, and
- preventing and reducing visual clutter.

Lohr, Amy

From: Bayless, Glen
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 9:59 AM
To: Lohr, Amy
Subject: RE: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

The draft looks very good. A couple suggestions:

2nd paragraph - substitute promote for encourage
Final paragraph - strike the word "the"

Mr. Glen Bayless
Planning Commissioner
Sugarland Run District

From: Lohr, Amy
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Klancher, Robert; Ruedisueli, Kevin; Bayless, Glen; Maio, Peggy; Syska, Helena; Robinson, Gigi; Austin, Erin; Ronis, Valdis; Keirce, Clifford
Cc: Merrithew, John E..
Subject: FW: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Good Morning,

Here is the draft purpose statement (re-write of Section 5-1201). Please review and if you have comments, please e-mail them and I will distribute to the Sub-Committee for their Monday June 28 meeting.

Thank you,
Amy Lohr

703-737-8890

-----Original Message-----

From: Syska, Helena
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Lohr, Amy
Cc: Syska, Helena
Subject: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Dear Amy,

Thank you and all the staff for their excellent presentations at yesterday's first Sign Ordinance Subcomm'e meeting.

Attached is the draft rewrite of the Purpose following our discussions. To the extent possible, I hope it captures the intent of our discussion and comments that were submitted. The section covers the following outline:

--Effect of Visual Environment on Community --Contribution of Good Signage to the Visual Environment --LC's Commitment to Good Signage --Primary Purposes of Signage --Value of Careful Control over Signage --Priority of Signage in Zoning and Land Use --Standards Covered for Signage --Reasons for Regulations

Please forward this draft to the Subcomm'e, other Planning Commission members, and appropriate staff for review and submission of additional comments to you for our next consideration as directed by Subcomm'e Chair Maio.

Lohr, Amy

From: Ruedisueli, Kevin
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 10:56 AM
To: Lohr, Amy; Klancher, Robert; Bayless, Glen; Maio, Peggy; Syska, Helena; Robinson, Gigi; Austin, Erin; Ronis, Valdis; Keirce, Clifford
Cc: Merrithew, John E..
Subject: RE: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Amy,
This is now quite clear. I like it, and have no critical comments.
Thanks,
Kevin

From: Lohr, Amy
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Klancher, Robert; Ruedisueli, Kevin; Bayless, Glen; Maio, Peggy; Syska, Helena; Robinson, Gigi; Austin, Erin; Ronis, Valdis; Keirce, Clifford
Cc: Merrithew, John E..
Subject: FW: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Good Morning,

Here is the draft purpose statement (re-write of Section 5-1201). Please review and if you have comments, please e-mail them and I will distribute to the Sub-Committee for their Monday June 28 meeting.

Thank you,

Amy Lohr

703-737-8890

-----Original Message-----

From: Syska, Helena
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Lohr, Amy
Cc: Syska, Helena
Subject: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Dear Amy,

Thank you and all the staff for their excellent presentations at yesterday's first Sign Ordinance Subcomm'e meeting.

Lohr, Amy

From: Maio, Peggy
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 11:17 AM
To: Lohr, Amy
Cc: piotsys@verizon.net
Subject: FW: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose
Attachments: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose.docx

Amy,

I trust it's ok to send to Helena so she gets a sense of my feedback. Helena, thank you very, very much for your help. I like it a lot.

Peggy

From: Lohr, Amy
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Klancher, Robert; Ruedisueli, Kevin; Bayless, Glen; Maio, Peggy; Syska, Helena; Robinson, Gigi; Austin, Erin; Ronis, Valdis; Keirce, Clifford
Cc: Merrithew, John E..
Subject: FW: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Good Morning,

Here is the draft purpose statement (re-write of Section 5-1201). Please review and if you have comments, please e-mail them and I will distribute to the Sub-Committee for their Monday June 28 meeting.

Thank you,

Amy Lohr

703-737-8890

-----Original Message-----

From: Syska, Helena
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Lohr, Amy
Cc: Syska, Helena
Subject: Sign Ordinance - Draft Rewrite of Purpose

Dear Amy,

Zoning Ordinance

Section 5-1200 Sign Regulations.

5-1201 Purpose.

The visual environment has an effect on and is an important element in safeguarding life, health and property and in preserving the natural beauty, historic and cultural attributes, unique character and attractiveness of communities.

The intent of this section, therefore, is to encourage well-designed signage that contributes in positive ways to Loudoun County's visual environment while expressing local character and helping to develop a distinctive image of the County.

Loudoun County recognizes that signs are a necessary form of communication and will strive to provide clear and consistent rules and regulations and an efficient and effective means of administering and enforcing sign regulations.

The primary purposes of signage regulations are (1) to help people find a location without difficulty or confusion and (2) to clearly identify places of business and communities.

Careful control of signage can protect the general welfare and safety of individuals and property values, support economic vitality and viability, and enhance Loudoun's communities overall.

Signs are to be considered accessory components of an overall composition of architectural elements, not as freestanding or dominant architectural elements by themselves. They are subordinate to the structures and land use functions they reference.

This Section establishes standards for the location, design, construction, installation, display, safety and maintenance of signs.

More specifically, while not restricting the freedom of expression, regulations are hereby established for

- assuring compatibility of signs with land uses,
- promoting reasonable, orderly, attractive and effective signage,
- controlling the type, number, physical dimensions, design and location of signs,
- treating similar types of signs consistently,
- minimizing competing demands for visual attention to graphic messages or displays, and
- preventing and reducing visual clutter.

###

A3-6

ATTACHMENT 4

Additional questions/assumptions on basic issues to guide future discussion on the draft text and matrix:

1. Can Sign Plans (or whatever title needs to be used to distinguish from approved sign packages) be administrative, with some degree of flexibility (not bonus) built in but with maximum parameters? An example is the choice of awning, blade, or window sign with an aggregate square footage, such as was approved for the Lansdowne Village. Is an administrative process the vehicle to encompass the types of signs that are routinely being approved in the current system of sign packages, such as directional signs, the question of logo use, the scale of sign to building, the number and variety of tenant signs and others?
2. If sign plans become administrative, should there be a legislative process that permits a.) signs not permitted in the ordinance, or b.) modification of signs permitted. Would it be by minor special exception or special exception?
3. Should Sign Plans apply to commercial sites only, including mixed use districts that have commercial? Can they apply to a single commercial use within a larger site? Do several signs on one building constitute a "plan"?
4. Sign area: Should the background count or not?

ATTACHMENT 4

A4-1